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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

GURI GONZALEZ,
Plaintiff,
vs.

MELROSE ASPIRATIONS, LLC; and
DOES 1 to 10,
Defendants.

Case No.:

COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE
RELIEF AND DAMAGES FOR DENIAL
OF CIVIL RIGHTS OF A DISABLED
PERSON IN VIOLATIONS OF

1. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES
ACT;
2. CALIFORNIA'S UNRUH CIVIL
RIGHTS ACT;
3. CALIFORNIA'S DISABLED
PERSONS ACT;
4. CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY
CODE;
5. NEGLIGENCE

Plaintiff GURI GONZALEZ ("Plaintiff") complains of Defendants MELROSE
ASPIRATIONS, LLC; and DOES 1 to 10 ("Defendants") and alleges as follows:

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PARTIES

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2 1. Plaintiff is a California resident with a physical disability with substantial
3 limitation in his ability to walk. Plaintiff suffers from complete tetraplegia due to lesion
4 at C5-C7 level and requires the use of a wheelchair at all times when traveling in public.

5 2. Defendants are, or were at the time of the incident, the real property owners,
6 business operators, lessors and/or lessees of the real property for a restaurant
7 (“Business”) located at or about 7315 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, California.

8 3. The true names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, associate or
9 otherwise of Defendant DOES 1 through 10, and each of them, are unknown to Plaintiff,
10 who therefore sues said Defendants by such fictitious names. Plaintiff will ask leave of
11 Court to amend this Complaint when the true names and capacities have been
12 ascertained. Plaintiff is informed and believes and, based thereon, alleges that each such
13 fictitiously named Defendants are responsible in some manner, and therefore, liable to
14 Plaintiff for the acts herein alleged.

15 4. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges that, at all relevant
16 times, each of the Defendants was the agent, employee, or alter-ego of each of the other
17 Defendants, and/or was acting in concert with each of the other Defendants, and in doing
18 the things alleged herein was acting with the knowledge and consent of the other
19 Defendants and within the course and scope of such agency or employment relationship.

20 5. Whenever and wherever reference is made in this Complaint to any act or
21 failure to act by a defendant or Defendants, such allegations and references shall also be
22 deemed to mean the acts and failures to act of each Defendant acting individually, jointly
23 and severally.

24 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

25 6. The Court has jurisdiction of this action pursuant to 28 USC §§ 1331 and
26 1343 for violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, (42 USC §12101, *et*
27 *seq.*)
28

1 7. Pursuant to pendant jurisdiction, attendant and related causes of action,
2 arising from the same nucleus of operating facts, are also brought under California law,
3 including, but not limited to, violations of California Civil Code §§51, 51.5, 52(a), 52.1,
4 54, 54., 54.3 and 55.

5 8. Plaintiff's claims are authorized by 28 USC §§ 2201 and 2202.

6 9. Venue is proper in this court pursuant to 28 USC §1391(b). The real
7 property which is the subject of this action is located in this district, Los Angeles County,
8 California, and Plaintiff's causes of action arose in this action.

9 **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

10 10. In or about December of 2022, Plaintiff went to the Business.

11 11. The Business is a restaurant business establishment, open to the public, and
12 is a place of public accommodation and affects commerce through its operation.
13 Defendants provide parking spaces for customers.

14 12. While attempting to enter the Business during each visit, Plaintiff personally
15 encountered a number of barriers that interfered with his ability to use and enjoy the
16 goods, services, privileges, and accommodations offered at the Business.

17 13. To the extent of Plaintiff's personal knowledge, the barriers at the Business
18 included, but were not limited to, the following:

- 19 a. Defendants failed to comply with the federal and state standards for
20 the parking space designated for persons with disabilities. Defendants
21 failed to provide any parking space designated for persons with
22 disabilities with the exception of marked blue lines on the ground.
- 23 b. Defendants failed to comply with the federal and state standards for
24 the parking space designated for persons with disabilities. Defendants
25 failed to provide the parking space identification sign with the
26 International Symbol of Accessibility.
- 27 c. Defendants failed to comply with the federal and state standards for
28 the parking space designated for persons with disabilities. Defendants

1 failed to post required signage such as “Van Accessible,” “Minimum
2 Fine \$250” and “Unauthorized Parking.”

3 d. Defendants failed to maintain the parking space designated for
4 persons with disabilities to comply with the federal and state
5 standards. Defendants failed to provide proper van accessible space
6 designated for the persons with disabilities.

7 e. Defendants failed to maintain the parking space designated for
8 persons with disabilities to comply with the federal and state
9 standards. Defendants failed to paint the ground as required.

10 f. Defendants failed to maintain the parking space designated for
11 persons with disabilities to comply with the federal and state
12 standards. Defendants failed to mark the space with the International
13 Symbol of Accessibility.

14 14. These barriers and conditions denied Plaintiff the full and equal access to the
15 Business and caused him difficulty and frustration. Plaintiff wishes to patronize the
16 Business, however, Plaintiff is deterred from visiting the Business because his knowledge
17 of these violations prevents him from returning until the barriers are removed.

18 15. Based on the violations, Plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that
19 there are additional barriers to accessibility at the Business after further site inspection.
20 Plaintiff seeks to have all barriers related to his disability remedied. *See Doran v. 7-
21 Eleven, Inc.* 524 F.3d 1034 (9th Cir. 2008).

22 16. In addition, Plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that Defendants
23 knew that particular barriers render the Business inaccessible, violate state and federal
24 law, and interfere with access for the physically disabled.

25 17. At all relevant times, Defendants had and still have control and dominion
26 over the conditions at this location and had and still have the financial resources to
27 remove these barriers without much difficulty or expenses to make the Business
28 accessible to the physically disabled in compliance with ADDAG and Title 24

1 regulations. Defendants have not removed such barriers and have not modified the
2 Business to conform to accessibility regulations.

3 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

4 **VIOLATION OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990**

5 18. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
6 paragraphs in this complaint.

7 19. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), no individual
8 shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of
9 the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of
10 public accommodation by any person who owns, leases, or leases to, or operates a place
11 of public accommodation. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a).

12 20. Discrimination, *inter alia*, includes:

- 13 a. A failure to make reasonable modification in policies, practices, or
14 procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford such
15 goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations
16 to individuals with disabilities, unless the entity can demonstrate that
17 making such modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of
18 such goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or
19 accommodations. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(ii).
- 20 b. A failure to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that no
21 individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or
22 otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the
23 absence of auxiliary aids and services, unless the entity can
24 demonstrate that taking such steps would fundamentally alter the
25 nature of the good, service, facility, privilege, advantage, or
26 accommodation being offered or would result in an undue burden. 42
27 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iii).
- 28

- 1 c. A failure to remove architectural barriers, and communication barriers
2 that are structural in nature, in existing facilities, and transportation
3 barriers in existing vehicles and rail passenger cars used by an
4 establishment for transporting individuals (not including barriers that
5 can only be removed through the retrofitting of vehicles or rail
6 passenger cars by the installation of a hydraulic or other lift), where
7 such removal is readily achievable. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv).
- 8 d. A failure to make alterations in such a manner that, to the maximum
9 extent feasible, the altered portions of the facility are readily
10 accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including
11 individuals who use wheelchairs or to ensure that, to the maximum
12 extent feasible, the path of travel to the altered area and the
13 bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered
14 area, are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with
15 disabilities where such alterations to the path or travel or the
16 bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered
17 area are not disproportionate to the overall alterations in terms of cost
18 and scope. 42 U.S.C. § 12183(a)(2).

19 21. Where parking spaces are provided, accessible parking spaces shall be
20 provided. 1991 ADA Standards § 4.1.2(5); 2010 ADA Standards § 208. One in every
21 eight accessible spaces, but not less than one, shall be served by an access aisle 96 in
22 (2440 mm) wide minimum and shall be designated “van accessible.” 1991 ADA
23 Standards § 4.1.2(5)(b). For every six or fraction of six parking spaces, at least one shall
24 be van parking space. 2010 ADA Standards § 208.2.4.

25 22. Moreover, an additional sign shall be posted either in a conspicuous place at
26 each entrance to an off-street parking facility or immediately adjacent to on-site
27 accessible parking and visible from each parking space. The additional sign shall not be
28 less than 17 inches wide by 22 inches high. The additional sign shall clearly state in

1 letters with a minimum height of 1 inch the following: “Unauthorized vehicles parked in
2 designated accessible spaces not displaying distinguishing placards or special license
3 plates issued for persons with disabilities will be towed always at the owner’s expense...”
4 *See* CBC § 11B-502.8, *et seq.*

5 23. Here, Defendants failed to provide any parking space designated for persons
6 with disabilities with the exception of marked blue lines on the ground. Defendants also
7 failed to provide the parking space identification sign with the International Symbol of
8 Accessibility. In addition, Defendants failed to provide signs stating “Minimum Fine
9 \$250” and “Van Accessible.” Moreover, Defendants failed to provide the additional sign
10 with the specific languages stating “Unauthorized vehicles parked in designated
11 accessible spaces not displaying distinguishing placards or special license plates issued
12 for persons with disabilities will be towed always at the owner’s expense...”

13 24. For the parking spaces, access aisles shall be marked with a blue painted
14 borderline around their perimeter. The area within the blue borderlines shall be marked
15 with hatched lines a maximum of 36 inches (914 mm) on center in a color contrasting
16 with that of the aisle surface, preferably blue or white. The words "NO PARKING" shall
17 be painted on the surface within each access aisle in white letters a minimum of 12 inches
18 (305 mm) in height and located to be visible from the adjacent vehicular way. CBC §
19 11B-502.3.3.

20 25. Here, Defendants failed to properly maintain the access aisles as there was
21 no “NO PARKING” painted on the parking surface.

22 26. The surface of each accessible car and van space shall have surface
23 identification complying with either of the following options: The outline of a profile
24 view of a wheel chair with occupant in white on a blue background a minimum 36” wide
25 by 36” high (914 mm x 914 mm). The centerline of the profile view shall be a maximum
26 of 6 inches (152 mm) from the centerline of the parking space, its sides parallel to the
27 length of the parking space and its lower side or corner aligned with the end of the
28 parking space length or by outlining or painting the parking space in blue and outlining

1 on the ground in white or a suitable contrasting color a profile view of a wheel chair with
2 occupant. *See* CBC § 11B-502.6.4, *et seq.*

3 27. Here, Defendants failed to paint the International Symbol of Accessibility on
4 the surface as required.

5 28. By failing to maintain the facility to be readily accessible and usable by
6 Plaintiff, Defendants are in violation of Plaintiff's rights under the ADA and its related
7 regulations.

8 29. The Business has denied and continues to deny full and equal access to
9 Plaintiff and to other people with disabilities. Plaintiff has been and will continue to be
10 discriminated against due to the lack of accessible facilities, and therefore, seeks
11 injunctive relief to alter facilities to make such facilities readily accessible to and usable
12 by individuals with disabilities.

13 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

14 **VIOLATION OF THE UNRUH CIVIL RIGHTS ACT**

15 30. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
16 paragraphs in this complaint.

17 31. California Civil Code § 51 states, "All persons within the jurisdiction of this
18 state are free and equal, and no matter what their sex, race, color, religion, ancestry,
19 national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual
20 orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status are entitled to the full
21 and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business
22 establishments of every kind whatsoever."

23 32. California Civil Code § 52 states, "Whoever denies, aids or incites a denial,
24 or make any discrimination or distinction contrary to Section 51, 51.5, or 51.6, is liable
25 for each and every offense for the actual damages, and any amount that may be
26 determined by a jury, or a court sitting without a jury, up to a maximum of three times the
27 amount of actual damage but in no case less than four thousand dollars (\$4,000) and any
28

1 attorney's fees that may be determined by the court in addition thereto, suffered by any
2 person denied the rights provided in Section 51, 51.5, or 51.6.

3 33. California Civil Code § 51(f) specifies, "a violation of the right of any
4 individual under federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336)
5 shall also constitute a violation of this section."

6 34. The actions and omissions of Defendants alleged herein constitute a denial
7 of full and equal accommodation, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services by
8 physically disabled persons within the meaning of California Civil Code §§ 51 and 52.
9 Defendants have discriminated against Plaintiff in violation of California Civil Code §§
10 51 and 52.

11 35. The violations of the Unruh Civil Rights Act caused Plaintiff to experience
12 difficulty, discomfort, or embarrassment. The Defendants are also liable for statutory
13 damages as specified in California Civil Code §55.56(a)-(c).

14 **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

15 **VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA DISABLED PERSONS ACT**

16 36. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
17 paragraphs in this complaint.

18 37. California Civil Code § 54.1(a) states, "Individuals with disabilities shall be
19 entitled to full and equal access, as other members of the general public, to
20 accommodations, advantages, facilities, medical facilities, including hospitals, clinics,
21 and physicians' offices, and privileges of all common carriers, airplanes, motor vehicles,
22 railroad trains, motorbuses, streetcars, boats, or any other public conveyances or modes
23 of transportation (whether private, public, franchised, licensed, contracted, or otherwise
24 provided), telephone facilities, adoption agencies, private schools, hotels, loading places,
25 places of public accommodations, amusement, or resort, and other places in which the
26 general public is invited, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by
27 law, or state or federal regulation, and applicable alike to all persons.

38. California Civil Code § 54.3(a) states, “Any person or persons, firm or corporation who denies or interferes with admittance to or enjoyment of public facilities as specified in Sections 54 and 54.1 or otherwise interferes with the rights of an individual with a disability under Sections 54, 54.1 and 54.2 is liable for each offense for the actual damages, and any amount as may be determined by a jury, or a court sitting without a jury, up to a maximum of three times the amount of actual damages but in no case less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and any attorney’s fees that may be determined by the court in addition thereto, suffered by any person denied the rights provided in Section 54, 54.1, and 54.2.

39. California Civil Code § 54(d) specifies, “a violation of the right of an individual under Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336) also constitute a violation of this section, and nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the access of any person in violation of that act.

40. The actions and omissions of Defendants alleged herein constitute a denial of full and equal accommodation, advantages, and facilities by physically disabled persons within the meaning of California Civil Code § 54. Defendants have discriminated against Plaintiff in violation of California Civil Code § 54.

41. The violations of the California Disabled Persons Act caused Plaintiff to experience difficulty, discomfort, and embarrassment. The Defendants are also liable for statutory damages as specified in California Civil Code §55.56(a)-(c).

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 19955, et seq.

42. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior paragraphs in this complaint.

43. Plaintiff and other similar physically disabled persons who require the use of a wheelchair are unable to use public facilities on a “full and equal” basis unless each such facility is in compliance with the provisions of California Health & Safety Code §

1 19955 et seq. Plaintiff is a member of the public whose rights are protected by the
 2 provisions of California Health & Safety Code § 19955 et seq.

3 44. The purpose of California Health & Safety Code § 1995 et seq. is to ensure
 4 that public accommodations or facilities constructed in this state with private funds
 5 adhere to the provisions of Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 4450) of Division 5 of
 6 Title 1 of the Government Code. The code relating to such public accommodations also
 7 require that “when sanitary facilities are made available for the public, clients, or
 8 employees in these stations, centers, or buildings, they shall be made available for
 9 persons with disabilities.

10 45. Title II of the ADA holds as a “general rule” that no individual shall be
 11 discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of goods
 12 (or use), services, facilities, privileges, and accommodations offered by any person who
 13 owns, operates, or leases a place of public accommodation. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a).
 14 Further, each and every violation of the ADA also constitutes a separate and distinct
 15 violation of California Civil Code §§ 54(c) and 54.1(d), thus independently justifying an
 16 award of damages and injunctive relief pursuant to California law, including but not
 17 limited to Civil Code § 54.3 and Business and Professions Code § 17200, et seq.

18 **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

19 **NEGLIGENCE**

20 46. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
 21 paragraphs in this complaint.

22 47. Defendants have a general duty and a duty under the ADA, Unruh Civil
 23 Rights Act and California Disabled Persons Act to provide safe and accessible facilities
 24 to the Plaintiff.

25 48. Defendants breached their duty of care by violating the provisions of ADA,
 26 Unruh Civil Rights Act and California Disabled Persons Act.

27 49. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants’ negligent conduct, Plaintiff
 28 has suffered damages.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully prays for relief and judgment against Defendants as follows:

1. For preliminary and permanent injunction directing Defendants to comply with the Americans with Disability Act and the Unruh Civil Rights Act;
2. Award of all appropriate damages, including but not limited to statutory damages, general damages and treble damages in amounts, according to proof;
3. Award of all reasonable restitution for Defendants' unfair competition practices;
4. Reasonable attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and costs of suit in this action;
5. Prejudgment interest pursuant to California Civil Code § 3291; and
6. Such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

Pursuant to Rule 38(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

Dated: March 16, 2023

SO. CAL. EQUAL ACCESS GROUP

By: /s/ Jason J. Kim
Jason J. Kim, Esq.
Attorneys for Plaintiff